

# EPA REMOTE WORK ADVISORY BOARD

## Standard Operating Procedure

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to establish a clear understanding of the responsibilities of the EPA Remote Work Advisory Board.

### SCOPE

Per [EPA Order 3110.32A](#) (11/17/2021), the Remote Work Advisory Board will provide guidance on precedent, impact, and other matters related to the agency's management and administration of remote work. The intent is to ensure fair, equitable, and consistent implementation across the agency. This document describes how the EPA Remote Work Advisory Board will properly:

- Receive, review, and document the Board's recommendations on all Remote Work Request Packages,
- Assess Remote Work Request Packages against consistent criteria to help inform decision-makers, and
- Forward all requests to the respective Deciding Official for final action.
- Formulate recommendations to Senior Leadership regarding necessary program modifications, as well as necessary clarification, definitions, and additional guidance, procedures, or implementation practices.

### RESPONSIBILITY

It's the responsibility of the members of the EPA Remote Work Advisory Panel to ensure that all the below steps are followed with accuracy and unbiased reasoning.

### INTERIM PROCEDURE

1. All Remote Work applications should follow the respective Region and Program internal procedures prior to submission to the [Remote Work Advisory Board Email Box](#). This includes an assessment of the Basic Eligibility Requirements. Each Region and Program will submit summary information on all received applications according to the Remote Work Checklist.
  - a) Prior to submission, Regions and Programs should confirm that all PII is redacted from the document. Until an enterprise management system for Telework and Remote Work is deployed, Regions and Programs are responsible for Records Management Requirements outlined in [EPA Order 3110.32A](#) (11/17/2021).
  - b) For a period of at least four (4) months, starting from the date the Board receives the first package for review, **all Remote Work Requests**, including those that received an initial denial from supervisors, will need to be submitted to the Remote Work Advisory Board Email Box following the instructions in item 1 above. These submissions must include written explanation of the supervisor's assessment and should be made **prior** to the supervisor providing written determination to the Remote Work Requestor.
2. Each Remote Work Request Package received via the [Email Box](#) will be uploaded into the Remote Work Advisory Panel Repository; ensuring the document is saved by the applicants last name and first initial and confirming all other PII is redacted.

3. The Advisory Board will review each supervisor-approved request (see item 1.b above for requests received during the first 4 months) in a timely manner to consult with and help inform the decision of the Deciding Official's approval or disapproval, providing a consistent, agency-level position to ensure basic eligibility requirements are met and uniform criteria is being utilized.
  - a) Each remote work request will be considered in light of impact on the agency's operations, work requirements, and budget in addition to employee eligibility requirements.
4. Board members will meet with Deciding Officials as needed to discuss any concerns on pending requests and consult on final decisions. Members from OMS and OGC must be present for Board Meetings to discuss and track the affirmation of final group decision on requests.
5. After consultation between Board Members and Deciding Officials, all requests will be forwarded to the respective Deciding Officials, or delegated POC, for final action.
  - a) If approved by the Deciding Officials, the supervisor will be required to submit a 'Change in Duty Station' action to the servicing SSC to officially update the employee's worksite to the remote work location.

**Note 1:** For the limited time frame noted above, the Deciding Official will receive all requests, including those initially denied by the supervisor, and all requests will be forwarded on for review to the Advisory Board.

This review may result in the Advisory Board: (a) supporting the supervisor's determination and engaging in consultation with the Deciding Official; (b) advising the supervisor to conduct further analysis (if, after further analysis, the supervisor again does not support the request, the supervisor is required to submit their new determination to the Deciding Official and Advisory Board prior to notifying the applicant).

1. Deciding Officials will be informed of these reviews by the Advisory Board.

Note: The AFGE contract provides that the supervisor's review should generally be made within seven (7) calendar days.

**Note 2:** After the first 4 months, the Board will present collected findings to the EMC with a proposal on how to conduct the review process moving forward. The Board's assessment will include trends, challenges, and other conclusions established during this time. New guidance will be instituted as necessary, based on the developments of the initial 4-month review period. If at any time the Board has determined that a matter requires further guidance, definition, or clarification, with regard to any aspect of Remote Work implementation, procedure or practice, those matters will be reviewed with Subject Matter Experts and may result in additional recommendations to Senior Leadership.

Members of the Board are not permitted to share any Remote Work Request Packages with, or allow access to, any individual who is not a Deciding Official, Designated POC, or part of the EPA Remote Work Advisory Board.